



Grilling Safety Tips for Barbecues

It happens every year. The weather gets warmer, more people use outdoor grills – and incidents of grill-caused fires go up. In 2013-2017 outdoor grilling causes an annual average of 10,200 home fires, according to the National Fire Protection Association.

Gas grills cause more home fires than charcoal grills, the association adds. According to the Hearth, Patio & Barbecue Association, 64% of households own a gas grill, 44% own a charcoal grill and 9% own an electric grill.

Regardless of the type of grill you own, here are 9 BBQ safety tips that will keep you and your home safe for barbecuing season:

1. Grill outside and away from any structures

Charcoal and gas grills are designed for outdoor use only. However, NFPA reports that more than one-quarter (27%) of home fires started by outdoor grills began in a courtyard, terrace or patio, and 29% started on an exterior balcony or open porch. Pay attention to overhanging tree branches when you set up your grill.

2. Make sure your grill is stable

Only set up your grill on a flat surface and make sure the grill can't be tipped over. Consider using a grill pad or splatter mat underneath your grill to protect your deck or patio.

3. Keep your grill clean

Remove grease or fat buildup from both the grill and the tray below the grill. If you are using a charcoal grill, allow the coals to completely cool off before disposing of them in a metal container.

4. Check for propane leaks on your gas grill

Before the season's first barbecue, check the gas tank hose for leaks by applying a light soap and water solution to the hose and then turning on the gas. If there is a propane leak, the solution will bubble. Other signs of a propane leak include the smell of gas near the barbecue or a flame that won't light.

5. If the flame goes out, wait to re-light

If you are using a gas grill and the flame goes out, turn the grill and the gas off, then wait at least five minutes to re-light it.

6. Take care around the grill

Never leave a lit grill unattended. Don't allow kids or pets to play near the grill. Never try to move a lit or hot grill, and remember the grill will stay hot for at least an hour after use.

7. Be careful with charcoal starter fluid

If you use a charcoal grill, only use charcoal starter fluid. If the fire starts to go out, don't add any starter fluid or any other flammable liquids to the fire. Consider using a charcoal chimney starter, which uses newspaper to start the fire instead of starter fluid.

8. Wear the right clothing

Clothing can easily catch fire, so be sure your shirt tails, sleeves or apron strings don't dangle over the grill.

9. Be ready to put out the fire

Have baking soda on hand to control a grease fire and a fire extinguisher nearby for other fires. If you don't have a fire extinguisher, keep a bucket of sand next to the grill. Never use water to put out grease fire.

These easy-to-follow tips will help you and your family to enjoy a safe summer barbecuing season. For those grilling over an open fire, check out these fire pit safety tips to keep you and your guests safe.